



January 28, 2011

## FRCSE painters create living history on aircraft for Naval centennial

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Fleet Readiness Center Southeast aircraft painters apply a coat of Blue Gray over Light Gull Gray paint, a standard color scheme used by the Navy into 1943, to an S-3B Viking in October 2010. (U.S. Navy photo by Vic Pitts/Released)

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Fleet Readiness Center Southeast (FRCSE) is honoring Naval Aviation's 100 years of flight in 2011 by participating in the Heritage Paint Project to create living history on Navy aircraft.

For the Centennial of Naval Aviation (CoNA) celebration, painters at the military maintenance depot are meticulously applying vintage paint schemes covering several eras of Naval Aviation to selected aircraft not scheduled for deployment.

CoNA not only celebrates the contributions and sacrifices of Navy aviators, past and present, but those of Marine Corps and Coast Guard aviators as well.

In October 2010, FRCSE painters completed their first heritage color scheme on an S-3B Viking during a major maintenance event.



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The S-3 squadrons trace their early roots back to the carrier-based torpedo squadrons that fiercely fought in the Pacific theater during World War II, according to Centennial of Naval Aviation Project Director and Historian Capt. Richard Dann.

He worked closely with the Naval Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 30 "Bloodhounds" at Naval Air Station Point Mugu, Calif., to recreate a design that combined the torpedo bomber squadrons (VT) capabilities with the antisubmarine reconnaissance capabilities of the scouting squadrons (VS). It represents an early WWII tactical paint scheme, circa the 1942.

"During the early days of WWII, Naval aircraft received a camouflage of Blue Gray over Light Gull Gray," he said. "This was the standard scheme for aircraft into 1943. During WWII, paint schemes went through four major changes."

When he traveled to Jacksonville to accept the Viking in November 2010, VX-30 Commanding Officer Cmdr. John Rousseau said the squadron wanted to participate in the centennial and "pay tribute to our heritage."

"We chose a paint scheme from 1942 to commemorate the Battle of Midway, the turning point of the war in the Pacific," said Rousseau.

FRCSE painted its second aircraft, an F/A-18 Hornet, in January to represent mid-WWII, from late 1943 to late 1944.

FRCSE painters applied Sea Blue paint to the top of the Hornet and Intermediate Blue to the fuselage sides, vertical stabilizers, the LEX (leading edge extension) fences and the bottom portion of the wing outside the fold line. They painted the bottom with Insignia White.

F/A-18 Hornet Pilot Cmdr. Mitch Conover delivered the aircraft to the "Flying Eagles" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 122 in Lemoore, Calif., Jan. 13.

VFA-122 Maintenance Office Cmdr. Frank Bennett, responsible for 110 aircraft said of the Hornet with its heritage paint scheme, "The entire NAS Lemoore flight line likes it."

"It looks a lot better than the artist's rendition," he said. "We are doing an acceptance inspection right now. We are painting on additional WWII markings, insignias from the USS Hornet (CV-12) for the kick-off celebration of the CoNA in San Diego next month."

The USS Hornet, an Essex-class aircraft carrier commissioned in November 1943, had an "extraordinary combat



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record in WWII, engaging the enemy in the Pacific,” according to the Historic Naval Ships Association website. The ship is now a historic floating museum in Alameda, Calif. The F/A-18 strike fighter carries on the name of Hornet in today's Navy.

The latest “modern” aircraft to receive a vintage paint scheme is a P-3 Orion, a Navy patrol and reconnaissance aircraft. FRCSE painters applied a unique paint scheme used on large patrol aircraft from about 1957 to 1963.

Dann said this scheme “was commonly seen on the P5M Marlin and the P2V Neptune, and in some cases the PBM Mariner aircraft.”

“It was used on the P-3A for a very short time before the adoption of Light Gull Gray in place of Seaplane Gray,” he said. “The scheme consisted of a Seaplane Gray bottom and an Insignia White top.”

Patrol Squadron (VP) 9 attached to Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, chose to honor the VP-6 “Blue Sharks” by using the defunct squadron’s insignia on the P-3C Orion.

The Dictionary of American Naval Aviation Squadrons (Vol. 2) indicates the unit stood up as Bombing Squadron (VB) 146 in July 1943. In September 1948, it became the third squadron to earn the VP-6 designation, which it retained until its disestablishment in 1993.

In early March when the Heritage Paint Project is completed, 27 aircraft (16 from the Fleet and 11 from training commands) will sport the heritage colors.

Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard aviators will fly these unique aircraft at hundreds of air shows, flyovers, festivals, displays, tributes and other events during the yearlong celebration.

Capt. Washington I. Chambers, an 1876 U.S. Naval Academy graduate, pioneered the early development of Naval Aviation at the Bureau of Navigation according to his biography on the Arlington National Cemetery website.

He requisitioned the Navy’s first two Curtiss biplanes May 8, 1911. The date later became the official birthday of Naval Aviation.



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VX-30 Commanding Officer Cmdr. John Rousseau and Lt. Christian Pedersen taxi down the NAS Jacksonville runway Nov. 4, 2010, headed home to Point Mugu, Calif. FRCSE artisans applied the WWII tactical paint scheme chosen by the squadron to commemorate the Battle of Midway for the 2011 Centennial of Naval Aviation celebration. (U.S. Navy photo by Vic Pitts/Released)



Aircraft Painter Dean Taylor applies Intermediate Blue paint to the fuselage of an F/A-18 Hornet at Fleet Readiness Center Southeast Jan 4. Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 122 selected the vintage paint scheme that represents mid-WWII to honor the aircraft's namesake, the decommissioned Essex-class aircraft carrier USS Hornet (CV-12), during the Centennial of Naval Aviation. (U.S. Navy photo by Marsha Childs/Released)





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An F/A-18 Hornet sits in an overflow hangar at Fleet Readiness Center Southeast Jan. 12, awaiting its return to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 122 in Lemoore, Calif. The aircraft is part of the Centennial of Naval Aviation's Heritage Paint Project to recreate vintage paint schemes on modern aircraft. (U.S. Navy photo by Vic Pitts/Released)



On Jan. 13, F/A-18 Hornet Pilot Cmdr. Mitch Conover prepares for takeoff at NAS Jacksonville, Fla., in a jet painted in a vintage WWII paint scheme used from late 1943 to late 1944. Painters at Fleet Readiness Center Southeast are applying heritage color schemes to several military aircraft for the 100th anniversary of Naval Aviation. (Photo courtesy of NAS Jacksonville Air Operations)



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On Jan. 19, a P-3C Orion receives a vintage paint scheme used on large patrol aircraft from about 1957 to 1963. Aircraft painters at Fleet Readiness Center Southeast are painting the aircraft for Patrol Squadron (VP) 9, based in Hawaii in honor of the 100th anniversary of Naval Aviation. (U.S. Navy photo by Vic Pitts/Released)



On Jan. 28, Fleet Readiness Center Southeast in Jacksonville, Fla., completes a heritage paint scheme on a P-3C Orion for Patrol Squadron (VP) 9 attached to Marine Corps Base Hawaii. The squadron chose to honor the VP-6 "Blue Sharks" by using the defunct squadron's insignia on the modern aircraft. (U.S. Navy photo by Vic Pitts/Released)



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On Jan. 19, Aircraft Painter Jim Jenkins applies a stencil to the fuselage of a P-3C Orion aircraft painted a vintage scheme with a Seaplane Gray bottom and Insignia White top, commonly used on the P5M Marlin and the P2V Neptune in honor of the 2011 Centennial of Naval Aviation. (U.S. Navy photo by Vic Pitts/Released)



In the Avionics Graphic Art Shop Jan. 20, Graphic Designer Evan Seymour checks for ink inconsistencies on an adhesive-backed vinyl logo, part of a P-3C Orion's heritage paint scheme. He recreated the logo from a degraded image using sophisticated design software. (U.S. Navy photo by Vic Pitts/Released)

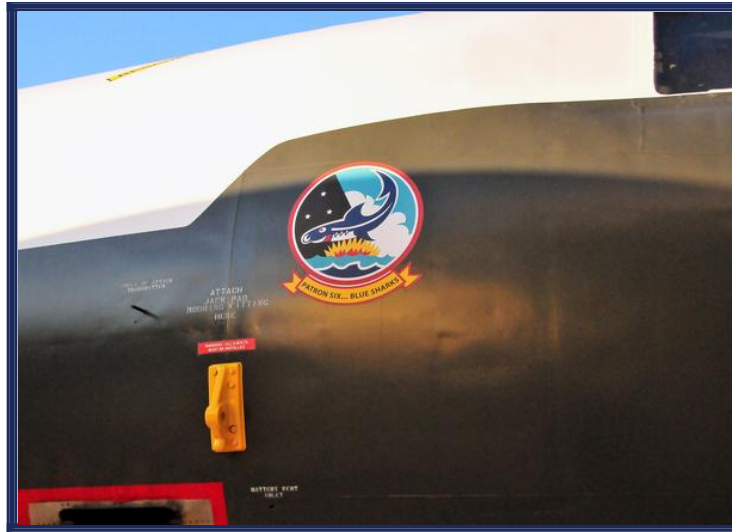




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Patrol Squadron (VP) 9 is honoring the disestablished VP-6 "Blue Sharks" by flying the defunct squadron's insignia on a modern P-3C Orion painted in vintage colors for the Naval Aviation centennial celebration. VP-6 had a stellar history of combat service, especially during WWII in Central Pacific and later in Korea during the 1950s. (U.S. Navy photo by Vic Pitts/Released)



Aircraft Painter Francisco Icban uses an orbital sander to feather the paint on the wing of a P-3 Orion prior to applying a vintage paint scheme in the Fleet Readiness Center Southeast Paint Hangar Jan. 6. (U.S. Navy photo by Marsha Childs/Released)





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A P-3 Orion painted Seaplane Gray overlaid with Insignia White letters is one of 27 aircraft taking part in the Heritage Paint Project for the Centennial of Naval Aviation. Selected fixed and rotary-wing aircraft are receiving various color schemes spanning several eras of Naval history for the 2011 celebration. (U.S. Navy photo by Vic Pitts/Released)



Materials Engineering Technician Ryan Westover (right) steadies a ladder for Corrosion Engineer Jack Benfer (left) as he uses a gloss meter to measure paint properties on an F/A-18 Hornet aircraft after FRCSE painters noticed a variation in the color's appearance and requested a quality control assessment Jan. 7. (U.S. Navy photo by Marsha Childs/Released)



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Prior to takeoff from NAS Jacksonville Nov. 4, 2010, Naval Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 30 Commanding Officer Cmdr. John Rousseau conducts a preflight inspection on an S-3B Viking painted in a unique WWII paint scheme. FRCSE artisans painted the aircraft in October 2010, following extensive maintenance and repair at the depot. (U.S. Navy photo by Vic Pitts/Released)